THE

VISION.

A

POEM.

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POEM

TO THE

MEMORY

OF

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JONAS HANWAY, ESQUIRE.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

VISION.

'TWAS night; and ſleep had o'er my eyelids ſhed
His lulling poppies and oblivious dews;
Methought, by two Elyſian Genii led
O'er dreary wilds, I met the welcome Muſe.
An emerald wand ſhe wav'd, and all around
A blooming landſcape roſe, ſupremely fair;
Imbowering trees, with golden fruitage crown'd,
Luxuriant flowers, whoſe ſweets imbalm the air:
Birds, jaſper fountains, grottoes, cryſtal hills,
Bath'd with the murmuring fall of ſilver-ſparkling rills.

Charm'd with the beauties of the fairy ſcene,
I now was entering a perfum'd alcove,
Where myrtles tall their bloſſom'd arches green
With bluſhing braids of eglantine inwove:
When lo! deſcending from an orient cloud,
A gliding Form advanc'd with gait ſublime;
While voices ſweet and choral harpings loud
My fancy ſooth'd with their melodious chime.
O'er her majeſtic lineaments ſerene
Heaven breath'd its ſofteſt ſmiles, and ſhone in all her mien!

More ſpotleſs far her forehead's dazzling white
Than new-blown jeſſamine or falling ſnows;
While o'er her cheek fluſh'd Beauty's blooming light
In rich expanſion raviſhingly flows.
Sweet the blue mildneſs of her winning eyes,
More gentle than the meekneſs of the dove
Which fearleſs in her downy boſom lies;
Her charming aſpect beams tranſcendent love.
With purple amarant and lilies wreath'd,
Her length of auburn hair celeſtial fragrance breath'd.

The zephyr on the trembling violet's breaſt,
As ſhe approach'd, in ſofter cadence ſigh'd;
The conſcious lawns more brilliant verdure dreſs'd,
The warbling ſtreams more muſically glide.
Blithe by her ſide two ſnowy lambkins ſtray,
Bleating their inoffenſive welcome meek;
The glowing flowers ſuperior charms diſplay,
And emulate her heaven-impurpled cheek.
Th' exulting groves diſtill'd ambroſial dew,
The ſky more brightly ſmil'd, illum'd with lovelier blue.

Her nectar'd lips two living rubies ſeem'd,
Whence, melting flow on my delighted ear,
A bland, inchanting voice mellifluous ſtream'd,
Whoſe ſound the languiſhments of death might chear!
Above yon ſun I triumph, heavenly-born,
Nurs'd in the ſkies, and PITY is my name;
I mingle with th' enraptur'd Sons of morn,
My boſom glowing with congenial flame:
My Halleluiahs harmonize with theirs
When from their pealing harps they pour their nobleſt airs.

When aim'd at guilty man the brandiſh'd fire
Of the Almighty's threatening ſword appears,
I deprecate the thunder of his ire,
And quench its lightning with my falling tears.
I on his ſov'reign juſtice dare intrude:
With aſpect amiably benign and mild
He views me kneeling, owns himſelf ſubdu'd
By the ſoft pleadings of his darling child;
And while my lute with glad Hoſannas rings
Ev'n liſtens with delight to its ſeraphic ſtrings!

Commiſſion'd by my great propitious Sire,
Whoſe ſun, faint emblem of Himſelf, on all
Impartial darts its life-diffuſing fire;
Whoſe freſhening ſhowers without diſtinction fall;
The veſting blaze of majeſty divine
Aſide I threw, and left the realms above,
By meek perſuaſive words and deeds benign
To ſhew mankind the image of his love.
In HANWAY's favour'd form I dwelt inſhrin'd,
And triumph'd uncontroul'd in his congenial mind.

High heaven's aſſiduous delegate below,
I taught his heart ev'n for the worm to feel.
To bleed at miſery in a fallen foe,
And ſooth his ſufferings, if it could not heal.
Sweeter, far ſweeter to th' ETERNAL's ear
Than hymns of angels is the generous ſigh;
More pleaſing far one ſympathizing tear
Than all heaven's glories, to his ſacred eye!
Her HANWAY's loſs PHILANTHROPY ſhall mourn,
And ſtrow, till time expires, her roſes o'er his urn.

A kind aſylum ever prompt to lend
Ere ſtarving miſery could his aid implore,
He ſought the title of the poor man's friend,
(Divine ambition!) and he ſought no more.
No echoing trump to peal his praiſes forth,
No mauſolèum, rear'd with matchleſs art,
His virtues need; the memory of his worth
Shall live for ever in his Country's heart.
She ceas'd. With ſoaring wing ſhe ſail'd away
To her own native clime, to brighter, happier day.

Inſtant with thrilling ſound a trumpet blew,
And at my ſide a flaming car appears:
I mount it ſtraigt; it in a moment flew,
By two ſwift eagles drawn, above the ſpheres.
And now my ſenſes drink the balmier ray
Of fairer ſuns in a more bliſsful clime,
Where groves aſcend, with brighter fountains gay,
And meadows flouriſh in ſuperior prime;
Where life's aſpiring tree o'er amarant bow'rs
Its brilliant foliage waves, and blooms immortal flow'rs!

O'er the delicious landſcape as I ſtray'd,
New viſtas open, lovelier ſcenes ariſe;
Till the whole Paradiſe of God diſplay'd
In boundleſs proſpect all around me lies!
Sudden a mountain, like a gorgeous throne
Of coſtlieſt pearl and flaming rubies, tow'rd;
Smooth round its baſis, like a ſilver zone,
A river pure its liquid cryſtal pour'd:
Unſeen the ſummit; its ſtupendous height
Was veil'd in blazing clouds, in ambient floods of light.

To celebrate th' unutterable things
I there beheld, o'erpowers a mortal tongue!
Some rapturous Seraph, lend thy hymning ſtrings,
And teach the language by Archangels ſung!
Not viſions more ſublime the * Bard amaz'd
In the proud plains the ſtreams of CHEBAR lave;
Not the young † Seer on holier myſteries gaz'd,
Where beauteous ULAI winds her amber wave;
Not § He in PATMOS' iſle, whoſe ſpirit ſoar'd
Upon ſeraphic wing, and inmoſt heaven explor'd!

Triumphant ſtrains burſt on my wondering ear,
As from ſoft dulcimer and deep-ton'd lyre;
Then myriads of angelic forms appear,
Celeſtial extaſies my breaſt inſpire.
Some ſtrike the cymbal, ſome the mellower lute;
Others their golden clarions loudly blow;
And ſolemn from the ſilver-ſounding flute,
Strong but more ſweet, the torrent raptures flow;
While all, diſſolv'd in hymns of burning zeal,
Around th' imperial mount in glittering order kneel.

* Ezekiel. † Daniel. § St. John.

But who is he, by two bright Cherubs led,
Clad in white robes, too glorious to behold?
A ſmiling Seraph places on his head
A coronet of palm adorn'd with gold.
'Tis HANWAY's ſelf! his aſpect more benign
Than when on earth he ſilenc'd miſery's cry!
Illumin'd are his eyes with joy divine,
He greets his radiant kindred of the ſky.
His feet as in a burning furnace glow,
Grand o'er the ſapphire road his ſtarry veſtments flow.

Waving their azure wings, th' immortal pow'rs
With kind complacence the new gueſt ſurvey;
Around the cryſtal domes and emerald tow'rs
Freſh ſtreams of ſplendour beautifully play.
And now heaven's organ breathes a loftier ſtrain,
From angel harps new Halleluiahs riſe;
While vocal warblings from each bower and plain
Sublimely ſwell the muſic of the ſkies!
The myſtic ſong his lyre adoring learns,
On its reſponſive ſtrings ſeraphic tranſport burns!

Theſe words ſoft-ſtreaming from th' empyreal hill,
Float on the wings of an ambroſial gale,
Hail, faithful follower of th' eternal will,
Thou votary of heaven-born Pity, hail.
Bleſt ſervant of th' A L L-H I G H, to thee 'tis given
To quaff delights that never, never cloy,
To mingle with th' inhabitants of heav'n,
And loſe Eternity in boundleſs joy!
Among thy brother angels now 'tis thine
On thrones ſublime as theirs with rival beams to ſhine!

How was that wealth which Folly's ſons profane
Ennobled, hallow'd by thy liberal hand,
While with each feeling pious and humane
Thy zealous heart ſtill gloried to expand!
Thine was th' exalted, angel-like employ,
With comfort's lenient balm to ſoften care,
To make the mourner's boſom throb with joy,
And huſh the frantic groan of wild deſpair.
The wretch, long us'd his ſcanty food to ſteep
In ſorrow, ſaw thy face, and quickly ceas'd to weep.

The ſilent language of the orphan's tears,
That ſpoke reſiſtleſs to thy heart on earth,
In ſacred union with thy ſpotleſs pray'rs,
Thy welcome wins from all of heavenly birth.
Thy rapt devotions fail'd not to aſcend
In pure memorial to the realms divine,
And with the holy clouds of incenſe blend
Which ſeraphs burn before th' Almighty's ſhrine.
Wafted by Faith upon her towering wings,
Such charities as thine delight the KING of Kings.

Here ceas'd the voice. I trembling then advance
And thus addreſs him, fainted ſpirit bend
From heaven's cerulean arch thy frequent glance,
And hear what bleſſings round thy urn aſcend!
Hear the deſerted * child, thy pious eye
Watch'd with a father's care, a father's love,
Liſp thy dear name with many a duteous ſigh,
And fondly call thee from the joys above.
See the ſad § penitent with awe profound
Bend o'er her patron's grave, and kiſs the ſacred ground.

* § Alluding to the Foundling and Magdalen Hoſpital, to which Mr. Hanway was a conſiderable benefactor.

Hear how ſhe breathes her warm reſolve to tread
In tempting ruin's flowery maze no more;
Hear how the aged who their daily bread
Owe to thy bounty, with the young deplore.
For, though imparadis'd with angel choirs,
Though the bleſt Kingdom, to the virtuous giv'n,
Shall ſtill be thine when Nature's ſelf expires,
Yet muſt it ſwell thy bliſs, improve thy heav'n,
To know, thy tomb is hail'd with grief ſincere,
Thy memory imbalm'd with many a grateful tear.

I ſaid: and ſtraight a warriour angel came
From a ſurrounding cloud; his rich attire
Was living purple mix'd with lambent flame;
A ſun, his ſhield; his falchion, ſolid fire.
Wide o'er him in triumphal grandeur ſpread,
A rainbow waves its roſeate ſtreamers high;
An adamantine helmet grac'd his head,
Stupendous glories lighten'd from his eye!
Though terror nodded in his crimſon plume,
Yet mildneſs temper'd ſweet his aſpect's orient bloom.

Majeſtic o'er the ſtar-beſpangled way
He moves, and as with voice of thunder cries,
Mortal, profane no more the realms of day,
Thoſe glorious ſeats, with thy unhallow'd eyes.
Hence to thy kindred element depart,
Thy native earth. And muſt yon ſordid ſphere,
Sad I reply'd, ſtill claim me? but my heart
Shall dwell for ever, heaven-enamour'd, here.
Straight the bright phantoms vaniſh'd from my ſight,
Sleep with the viſion fled, and left me veil'd in night.

F I N I S.

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